

Extra

Mite Control

The most important lesson to learn about controlling spider mites is to take action immediately. Start treatment as soon as you discover (or suspect) spider mites. During the warm months always be on alert for mites on *Hedera* ivy, croton, *Shefflera*, *Dracaena marginata* and all palms. Spray/wipe leaves weekly when an outbreak occurs. Even if you don't have a sprayer with you, you can still treat for a mite overpopulation. Grab two paper towels, wet them, and then get them soapy with a bit of hand soap. Use them like two mitts to wipe the undersides of the leaves. When the towels come away yellow, you know you have hit your target. Bring your spray bottle with you for the next three weeks and spray with a soapy solution to the point of drip. Especially target the underside of the leaf. Follow the spray with a quick wipe-down for even better control.



Shocking News

Did you know ... there are other plants that also hate to have changes in their environment. *Aralias* dislike change. With the change to summer you will probably notice all of your *Aralia* Family members (*Hedera* ivies, *Scheffleras*, *Fatsia*) doing a shed of mostly yellow leaves (though some will shed green as well). With *Aralias* an increase in water will usually solve this and if you can replant into a sub-irrigation pot the plant will return to being a happy camper.



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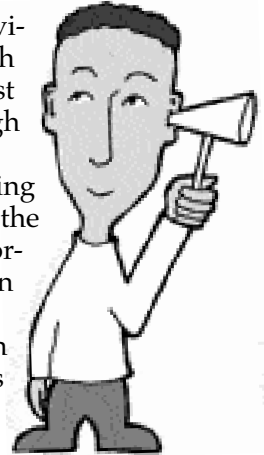
Customer Service

Are You an Active Listener?

When you are having a conversation with your supervisor, client or fellow technician, do you pay attention with your entire body and mind? Or do you find yourself just catching key phrases and editing what they say through your internal filters?

Active listening uses a variety of our senses, including sight and sound, in order to pay full attention to what the other person is saying. It can be a way to "hear" the important underlying emotions and ideas that may be present in what the other person is trying to convey.

Take the following quiz to help determine if you are an active listener already or if you could use some pointers to allow each conversation to reach its fullest potential. Write a "2" by each statement if you usually practice the skill mentioned. Write a "1" by those you *sometimes* do. Write a "0" if you seldom accomplish what is stated. Be truthful with yourself and see how you do.



1. I sit directly facing the speaker and am in close proximity.
2. I watch my partner during the conversation, but I avoid staring at them.
3. I don't state my opinions until the discussion is over.
4. I listen for changes in inflection to help me determine the speaker's moods and emotions.
5. I nod my head and use other subtle gestures when my partner makes points that seem particularly important.
6. I ask questions that help me understand the facts.
7. I don't give way to distractions while listening.
8. Now and then I repeat my partner's thoughts in my own words.
9. My demeanor complements the speaker's demeanor. Such as if the speaker is upset, my bearing and gestures will be calming and reassuring.
10. Throughout the conversation I ask my partner if I understand them correctly.
11. When asked a question, I respond without judgement, simply and directly.
12. I don't interrupt or finish the speaker's sentences.
13. I don't look at my watch or make other distracting gestures.
14. I think it's okay to say, "I don't know," if I can't offer an immediate answer to a problem.
15. I let my partner end the conversation by providing mutual conclusions and clarifications.

Total up your score and see how well you practice active listening. A score of 20 or more shows you indeed use your active listening skills on a regular basis. A score between 12 and 20 means you could use a bit more practice. If it's less than 12, don't panic, it just means you have some work to do to increase your awareness of those around you.